Degraded forest lands for landless poor

*296. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts made to pressurise State Governments to distribute waste and degraded forest lands among the landless poor; and

(b) the measures proposed to identify excess lands in villages and towns, for distribution among the poor?

THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) According to the guidelines issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, forest land cannot be diverted for non-site specific activities including distribution of land to the landless poor.

Betelnut Production in Assam

*297. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether pollution and some diseases are affecting the betelnut production in Assam, badly; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by the Central and the Assam Government to eradicate such maladies?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) There is no report of pollution and diseases affecting badly betelnut production in Assam.

(b) the incidence of bud rot and ganoderma diseases in betelnut have been reported at trace to low level in western districts of Assam. To combat the disease problem in betelnut, necessary monitoring at district level is going on and wherever necessary, control measures are being advised to be adopted by farmers by the extension officials of the State Agriculture Department. The Central Government have advised the State Agriculture department to follow the advised Integrated Disease Management practices for the purpose.